

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 13, 15, and 19-47 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 11, 13, 15, 19, 22-23, 27, 29-30, and 32-39 have been amended. Claims 14 and 16-18 have been canceled. New claims 43-47 have been added. No new matter has been introduced. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application as amended herein are respectfully requested.

In an Office Action dated March 26, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 1-42 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Masson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,293,469), hereinafter referred to as "Masson". These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The present invention is directed to a machine and method for preparing and dispensing documents relating to financial transactions, such as, e.g., money orders. The machine comprises a manually operable input unit through which an operator inputs data and operating commands. The input unit may include a keypad and/or a standard alphanumeric personal computer keyboard.

The machine also includes a document printer (i.e., a printer unit) for printing readable information on document forms, such as, e.g., money orders, based on data inputted at the input unit. The printer, in turn, has, *inter alia*, a document form storage receptacle for holding the document forms prior to being printed, an ink jet (or other) printer for printing readable information on the documents to produce completed documents, and a feed mechanism for feeding the document forms in succession from the receptacle to the printer, as well as for dispensing the printed documents from the machine after having

been printed. The printer unit also includes an optical reader for detecting and/or reading bar codes, as well as other marks and indicia.

The input unit and the printer unit are operably coupled to an internal control unit, i.e., one that is contained within the machine, which controls operation of the printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at the input unit. More specifically, the internal control unit comprises a program-controlled data-processing device having, *inter alia*, a central processing unit (CPU) containing a microprocessor operable in response to program instructions, input/output means connected for receiving the data and operating commands inputted at the input unit and for supplying data and control signals to the printer unit, and memory means for storing, *inter alia*, the program instructions for the microprocessor and for receiving and storing data received by the input/output means.

The input unit also contains its own controller printed circuit board provided with a central processing unit and a memory connected to operate the devices of the input unit under control of the main CPU of the above-mentioned internal control unit. Similarly, the printer unit includes a printer controller having stand-alone intelligence and including a central processing unit that communicates with the main CPU of the internal control unit and controls real-time printer functions.

In one embodiment, data representing the monetary value of each document and data representing the cumulative monetary value of a succession of documents are stored in the machine's internal memory. In addition, the machine includes a communication interface coupled to the memory for transmitting the data stored in the memory to a central

location that is remote from the machine. In this way, a plurality of the machines, each of which may be located at a different (retail) location, can communicate with a central location or "headquarters".

Thus, the internal control unit is operative to receive authorization instructions from the central headquarters via the interface and to block dispensing of printed documents when, e.g., the cumulative monetary value exceeds a predetermined value and an authorization instruction to dispense further printed documents has not been received by the control unit. In addition, the machine may include a time keeping device, wherein the internal control unit is operative under control of the time keeping device for blocking dispensing of printed documents when, for a predetermined period of time, no transmission of the data stored in the memory to the central headquarters has occurred. Alternatively, dispensing of printed documents may be blocked when reception of an authorization instruction from the central headquarters has not occurred for a predetermined period of time.

Claim 1, as amended, recites:

1. A machine for preparing and dispensing documents relating to financial transactions, said machine comprising:

a manually operable input unit for input of data and operating commands;

a document printer unit for printing readable information on document forms based on data inputted at said input unit, said document printer unit comprising:

a document form storage receptacle for holding the document forms prior to being printed,

an ink jet printer for printing the readable information on the documents to produce completed documents, and

a feed mechanism for feeding the document forms in succession from said receptacle to said printer and for dispensing printed documents from said machine after having been printed by said printer;

an internal control unit contained within said machine and coupled to said input unit and said printer unit for controlling operation of said printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at said input unit;

a memory connected for storing data representing the monetary value of each document and data representing the cumulative monetary value of a succession of documents;

a communication interface for conducting communications with a central location remote from said machine and operative to transmit the data stored in said memory to said central location; and

a time keeping device,

wherein each document is printed to have a monetary value determined by the data inputted at said input unit, said control unit is operative to receive authorization instructions from the central location via said interface, and said control unit is operative under control of said time keeping device for blocking dispensing of printed documents when no transmission of the data stored in said memory to the central location has occurred for a predetermined period of time or when reception of an authorization instruction from the central location has not occurred for a predetermined period of time. (Emphases added).

In contrast, as its title implies, the Masson patent is directed to a "transaction printer". That is, the invention disclosed in Masson is concerned less with an overall system, including hardware and software, for printing and dispensing financial documents, and is concerned more with the "printer" module, or unit, of the overall system, such that the remaining elements necessary for the overall system are treated as secondary, if at all.

For example, Masson provides that the printer may be "coupled to a host computer"

(col. 2, line 42) or “connected to a local system” (col. 4, line 10). (Emphases added). That is, although the “printer” may have its own “controller”, similar to the printer controller of the printer unit in the instant invention, the printer disclosed in Masson does not include an internal “control unit” for the overall system; the “host computer” and the “local system” are both external to the printer housing and must be physically “coupled”, or “connected”, to the printer.

More specifically, Masson provides that “the local system serves to direct operation of the printer and may comprise, for example, a terminal, a personal computer, a point of sale device, a network server or other suitable processing system.” Col. 2, lines 50-53. However, the description continues: “The present invention also contemplates a printer in which operation of the printer is inhibited using a mechanism and/or software contained within the printer itself.” *Id.*, lines 53-56. (Emphases added). That is, the local system is not “contained within the printer itself”, such that this limitation of amended claim 1 is not met, and it is only contemplated that *some* hardware and/or software be included “within the printer itself”.

In contrast, amended claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an internal control unit contained within said machine and coupled to said input unit and said printer unit for controlling operation of said printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at said input unit. That is, the overall control unit for operating the overall system is internal to, and contained within, the machine, and is connected to the input unit and printer unit in order to facilitate operation of the overall system in response to information received at the input unit. Thus, amended claim 1 recites the location, structure, and operation of the “internal control unit”

and provides for the operational interrelationship among the control unit, the input unit, and the printer unit.

In Masson, on the other hand, such information cannot even be inferred from the mere recitation that the "present invention also contemplates a printer in which operation of the printer is inhibited using a mechanism and/or software contained within the printer itself." Simply put, there is no disclosure as to what, if anything, would constitute the claimed "internal control unit" in Masson. Moreover, the structure, operation, operational interrelationships, etc. of the "mechanism and/or software" that *may* be contained within the printer are not disclosed. Thus, to the extent Masson mentions, in passing, that its printer may include within it additional "mechanism and/or software", there is simply no disclosure, i.e., enablement, as to what kind of mechanism or software may be included, or the components to which the hardware may be connected and/or which may be operated through the software, etc.

In light of the above, if the "local system" is taken to be, e.g., a personal computer, or a point of sale device, as taught by Masson, then the "local system" cannot constitute the above-mentioned internal "mechanism" or "software" because a point of sale device and a personal computer are operator-interactive devices that must remain external to the printer in order to receive input from the human operator. As such, they cannot be "internal". On the other hand, there is no teaching or suggestion in Masson as to what would, actually, be included "within the printer itself". In short, the "local system" is not, and, as disclosed, cannot be, internal to the printer, and Masson does not disclose or teach the "internal control unit" for the overall system recited in claim 1, as amended herein.

In the Office Action, the Examiner holds that claim 1 is anticipated by Masson, stating that the latter “discloses . . . a control unit coupled to the input unit and printer for controlling operation of the printer (column 4, lines 10-15).” Office Action, p. 3. The cited section (i.e., lines 10-15 of column 4) in Masson provides:

The printer is connected to a local system. The local system controls actuation of the solenoid by requiring the input of a special password or security code by an authorized user at the printer location in order to actuate the solenoid and thereby permit the feeder module to be separated from the printing module.

Unfortunately, the Examiner does not specify what, in the above-quoted passage, corresponds to the claimed control unit, and what corresponds to the claimed input unit. Nevertheless, it appears that the only structure that comes even close to purportedly constituting the claimed (internal) control unit is the “local system”. However, as discussed above, the local system is not internal to, or contained within, the printer. As such, there is no disclosure, teaching, or suggestion in Masson for the “internal control unit contained within” the machine, as recited in amended claim 1. In addition, contrary to the Examiner’s assertion, there is no mention whatsoever in the above-quoted language of how any purported control unit is “coupled to the input unit and printer for controlling operation of the printer”.

Moreover, it is not clear from the Office Action as to what the Examiner considers to be the structure in Masson that corresponds to the input unit. More specifically, on page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner cites to column 2, lines 50 – 56 of Masson as evidence of disclosure for “a manually operable input unit”. As quoted previously, this language in Masson is directed to the “local system”, which Masson indicates “may comprise, for

example, a terminal, a personal computer, a point of sale device, a network server or other suitable processing system.” Thus, according to the Examiner, the claimed “input unit” is constituted by the “local system” in Masson.

However, this only provides further proof that the “local system” is not internal to the printer because the claimed input unit is a manually-operable unit that must remain external to the machine so as to be able to receive information and data from a human operator. Therefore, if the input unit is constituted by the “local system”, then the “local system” must be external to the printer and, as such, cannot constitute the internal control unit recited in amended claim 1.

In light of the above, it is submitted that Masson does not disclose, teach, or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1, as amended herein, including, *inter alia*, an internal control unit contained within the machine and coupled to said input unit and said printer unit for controlling operation of said printer unit in response to data and commands inputted at said input unit. As such, it is respectfully submitted that Masson does not anticipate claim 1, as amended. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Amended claim 1 also includes the limitations positively recited in original claims 14 and 16-18. Thus, amended claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

a memory connected for storing data representing the monetary value of each document and data representing the cumulative monetary value of a succession of documents;

a communication interface for conducting communications with a

central location remote from said machine and operative to transmit the data stored in said memory to said central location; and

a time keeping device,

wherein each document is printed to have a monetary value determined by the data inputted at said input unit, said control unit is operative to receive authorization instructions from the central location via said interface, and said control unit is operative under control of said time keeping device for blocking dispensing of printed documents when no transmission of the data stored in said memory to the central location has occurred for a predetermined period of time or when reception of an authorization instruction from the central location has not occurred for a predetermined period of time.

In rejecting original claim 14, the Examiner cites col. 11, lines 40-52 of Masson, which provides:

According to one embodiment, the sensor 220 performs two functions. Sensor 220 detects either the actual leading edge of, or a top of form mark 222 preprinted on the form, as the form is advanced towards the printing position. In addition, the sensor 220 is operative to read a bar code 86 (or other document identifying verifying indicia) pre-printed on the print medium which may comprise, for example, money order stock as discussed previously. According to one embodiment, the sensor 220 detects a top of form mark 222 as opposed to the leading edge of the money order. In the illustrated application, the "top of form" mark 222 may be referred to as an "under bar" because it is located below the bar code 86.

Thus, on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that "Masson discloses the documents are printed to have a monetary value determined by the inputted data and means for storing the monetary value."

First, Applicants incorporate by reference the arguments made in connection with claim 11, *infra*, relating to the lack of recitation (in the passage cited by the Examiner) of any memory, let alone memory within the machine and for storing data representing the

monetary value of each document.

Second, even if, *arguendo*, such internal memory did exist and were disclosed in Masson, Applicants submit that there is no disclosure or teaching anywhere in Masson (including in the passage cited by the Examiner) for storing data representing the *cumulative monetary value of a succession of documents*, which is a positive limitation recited in amended claim 1. Therefore, for these additional reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, distinguishes over the cited reference and request that the rejection as to this claim be withdrawn.

As to original claims 16-18, the Examiner asserts that "Masson discloses receiving instructions from a central location to block dispensing of printed documents when the money value exceed [sic] a certain amount or no transmission of data from the central location has occurred for a period of time (column 2, lines 33-56)". Office Action, p. 5.

The section of Masson cited by the Examiner (i.e., col. 2, lines 33-56) provides as follows:

The sensor is also operative to read preprinted indicia or symbology on the money order forms. This symbology may comprise, for example, bar codes, binary codes, characters to be read by optical character recognition systems, magnetic characters to be read magnetically or any other form of encoded material. When the printer is used in the illustrated money order dispensing application, each individual money order form includes a preprinted bar code which among other information includes the money order number. When the printer is coupled to a host computer, the bar code information is read by the sensor on the printhead assembly and is sent to the host computer which uses this information to verify operation of the printer and to track accounting information associated with the generation of each money order. Should a bar code not be sensed or an inappropriate code read after multiple attempts, further operation of the printer would be inhibited by a local system until the problem is attended to and corrected.

The local system serves to direct operation of the printer and may comprise, for example, a terminal, a personal computer, a point of sale device, a network server or other suitable processing system. The present invention also contemplates a printer in which operation of the printer is inhibited using a mechanism and/or software contained within the printer itself. (Emphasis added).

To begin with, there is no disclosure in the above-quoted passage for the reception of an authorization instruction by the *internal control unit*. That is, as the underlined language in the above-quoted section of Masson indicates, even assuming, *arguendo*, that an authorization instruction is sent/received in the Masson invention, it is presumably the “local system” that inhibits further operation of the printer. However, as has been discussed previously, the “local system” does not qualify as the claimed “internal control unit”. Therefore, in contrast with the recitation in amended claim 1, there is no disclosure in Masson for the *internal control unit* receiving authorization instructions.

Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that, contrary to the Examiner’s assertion and the requirements of amended claim 1, there is no disclosure in the cited section of Masson (i.e., col. 2, lines 33-56) for a “time keeping device”, or for the (*internal*) control device “blocking dispensing of printed documents when no transmission of the data stored in said memory to the central location has occurred for a predetermined period of time”, or for the (*internal*) control device “blocking dispensing of printed documents when reception of an authorization instruction from the central location has not occurred for a predetermined period of time.”

At most, Masson discloses inhibiting further operation of the printer “should a bar code not be sensed or an inappropriate code read after multiple attempts”. (Emphases

added). Clearly, this description is devoid of any mention, or even suggestion, as to a time keeping device, let alone suspension of action based on the lack of data transmission to, or the lack of reception of authorization from, the central location. Still, the latter are positive limitations recited in amended claim 1. Therefore, for these additional reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended herein, distinguishes over the cited reference and request that the rejection of this claim (as amended) be withdrawn.

Claims 2 – 13, 15, and 40 (as amended) are dependent, either directly or indirectly, on amended claim 1. Therefore, since claim 1, as amended, distinguishes over the cited reference, then it is respectfully submitted that claims 2 – 13, 15, and 40 (as amended) also distinguish over the cited reference and should be allowable. As such, it is respectfully requested that the rejections as to claims 2 – 13, 15, and 40 be withdrawn.

Applicants also specifically traverse the rejection of claims 11, 13, and 15 as follows.

Amended claim 11 recites, *inter alia*, that:

said central processing unit is operative to store in said memory means data received by said input/output means from said input unit and representing the monetary value of each document, together with data received by said input/output means from said optical reader for the same document.

In rejecting claim 11, the Examiner cites col. 11, lines 40-52 of Masson, which provides:

According to one embodiment, the sensor 220 performs two functions. Sensor 220 detects either the actual leading edge of, or a top of form mark 222 preprinted on the form, as the form is advanced towards the printing position. In addition, the sensor 220 is operative to read a bar code 86 (or other document identifying verifying indicia) pre-printed on the print medium which may comprise, for example, money order stock as discussed

previously. According to one embodiment, the sensor 220 detects a top of form mark 222 as opposed to the leading edge of the money order. In the illustrated application, the "top of form" mark 222 may be referred to as an "under bar" because it is located below the bar code 86.

First, the above-quoted passage contains no disclosure of a memory means. Second, there is no disclosure, suggestion, or teaching of a memory means to store both: (1) data received by the input/output means from the input device and representing the monetary value of each document; and (2) data received by the input/output means from the optical reader for the same document.

Third, as reflected in the limitations of claims 7-10, the memory means recited in claim 11 is a part of the internal control unit. Therefore, even if, *arguendo*, the Masson printer did store both data received by the input/output means from the input device and representing the monetary value of each document and data received by the input/output means from the optical reader for the same document, such storage would presumably take place in the "host computer" or "local system". However, as discussed previously, the latter are external structures and, as such, would not be directed to memory means that is part of an "internal control unit contained within the machine". Therefore, for these additional reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 11 distinguishes over the cited reference and request that the rejection as to this claim be withdrawn.

Similarly, with regard to claim 13, the Examiner asserts that "[w]ith respect to claims 2, 10, 13, and 26, Masson discloses each document form carries a bar code and the machine comprises an optical reader for reading the bar code (column 2, lines 22-32)." Office Action, p. 3. The cited section of Masson provides:

the printhead assembly carries a sensor which is used to detect the leading edge of the money order form. According to one embodiment, the sensor reads a "top of form" mark preprinted on the money order form. The "top of form" mark serves as a reference by which printing positions and other functions, i.e. bursting, are determined. The sensor may be used to detect other alignment marks printed on the form. According to an alternate embodiment of the invention, the sensor directly detects the leading edge of the money order form, and/or a second "top of form" mark to assure correct form position.

As is apparent from the above-quoted passage, the latter is directed to a sensor, located on the printhead assembly, for detecting either a leading edge of, or a "top of form" mark preprinted on, a document. However, claim 13 recites "said input unit comprises a data reader for reading data stored in machine readable form on a data storage medium". That is, the input unit, and not the printhead assembly, carries a data reader for reading information. In addition, the information is read from a data storage medium, and not from the document to be printed upon. Thus, there is no disclosure, either in the passage cited by the Examiner, or elsewhere in Masson, for the limitation recited in claim 13. As such, for this additional reason, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 13 (as amended) distinguishes over the cited reference and request that the rejection as to this claim be withdrawn.

With regard to claim 15, as amended, Applicants respectfully submit that, contrary to the Examiner's assertion (see Office Action, p. 5) and the requirements of the claim, Masson does not disclose, suggest, or teach suspension of dispensing documents "when the cumulative monetary value exceeds a predetermined value and an authorization instruction to dispense further printed documents has not been received by said control unit". (Emphases added). At most, Masson discloses inhibiting further operation of the

printer “should a bar code not be sensed or an inappropriate code read after multiple attempts”. See Masson, col. 2, lines 33-56 *and* arguments presented above with respect to amended claim 1. (Emphases added). Clearly, the above-mentioned section of Masson cited by the Examiner in connection with claim 15 (see Office Action, p. 5) is devoid of any mention, or even suggestion, as to suspension of action based on the cumulative monetary value of documents, as is required by claim 15. Therefore, for these additional reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 15, as amended herein, distinguishes over the cited reference and request that the rejection as to this claim be withdrawn.

Independent claim 19 (as amended), as well as dependent claims 20-21 and 41, include limitations that are similar to various limitations of claims 1-3, and 5, as amended herein. Therefore, since amended claim 1, as well as claims 2-3 and 5, distinguish over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claims 19-21 and 41 also distinguish over the cited reference and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejections of claims 19-21 and 41 be withdrawn.

Similarly, independent claim 22 (as amended), as well as claim 42 dependent thereon, include limitations that are similar to various limitations of claims 1 and 4, as amended herein. Therefore, since amended claims 1 and 4 distinguish over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claims 22 and 42 also distinguish over the cited reference and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejections of claims 22 and 42 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 23, as amended, as well as claims 24-28 dependent thereon, include limitations that are similar to various limitations of claims 1 and 7-12, as amended herein. Therefore, since amended claim 1, as well as claims 7-12, distinguish over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claims 23-28 also distinguish over the cited reference and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejections of claims 23-28 be withdrawn.

Similarly, independent claim 29, as amended, includes limitations that are similar to various limitations of claims 1 and 13, as amended herein. Therefore, since amended claims 1 and 13 distinguish over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claim 29 also distinguishes over the cited reference for at least the same reasons as were discussed above with respect to amended claims 1 and 13 and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claim 29 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 30, as amended, as well as claims 31-33 (as amended) dependent thereon, include limitations that are similar to various limitations of claims 1 and 15, as amended herein. Therefore, since amended claims 1 and 15 distinguish over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claims 30-33 also distinguish over the cited reference and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejections of claims 30-33 be withdrawn.

Similarly, independent claim 34 (as amended) includes limitations that are similar to various limitations of claim 1, as amended herein. Therefore, since amended claim 1 distinguishes over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claim 34 also

distinguishes over the cited reference and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claim 34 be withdrawn.

Independent claim 35, as amended, includes limitations that are similar to various limitations of amended claim 1, as highlighted hereinabove. Therefore, since amended claim 1 distinguishes over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claim 35 also distinguishes over the cited reference and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejection of claim 35 be withdrawn.

Similarly, amended claim 36 includes similar limitations to those of claims 35 and 4 as amended; amended claim 37 includes similar limitations to those of claims 35 and 13, as amended; amended claim 38 includes similar limitations to those of claim 35, as amended; and amended claim 39 includes similar limitations to those of claims 35 and 15, as amended. Therefore, since claims 35, as well as claims 4, 13, and 15, as amended, distinguish over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claims 36-39 also distinguish over the cited reference for at least the same reasons as were discussed above with respect to claims 4, 13, 15, and 35 and should be allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the rejections of claims 36-39 be withdrawn.

New claims 43-47 have been added. Claims 43-45 are dependent on claims 40-42, respectively, and further indicate that the keyboard is directly electrically connected to the internal control unit. Support for claims 43-45 may be found, e.g., in the specification at p. 7, line 31 – p. 8, line 6. Given that new claims 43-45 are dependent on claims 40-42, it is believed that new claims 43-45 also distinguish over the cited reference, as discussed above with respect to claims 40-42, and should be allowable.

New claims 46 and 47 recite limitations that are similar to those of claims 1, 15, and 39, as amended. Therefore, since claim 39, as well as claims 1 and 15, as amended, distinguish over the cited reference, it is respectfully submitted that claims 46 and 47 also distinguish over the cited reference and should be allowable.

Applicants believe that claims 1-13, 15, and 19-42 (as amended), as well as new claims 43-47, are in condition for allowance, and a favorable action is respectfully requested. If, for any reason, the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference would advance prosecution of the application.

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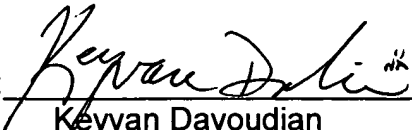
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The drawings were also objected to in the Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review dated December 27, 1999. In response, Applicants enclose herewith 7 sheets of formal drawings (Figs. 1-7) which address the objections raised by the Draftsperson and respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

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